

A Historical Review of Security Threats in Post-Colonial Nigeria: Focus on Issues Associated to Border Porosity in some Parts of Northern Nigeria since 2007

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Abstract

Insecurity has overshadowed events in the country such that it occurs in several dimensions; border related attacks seem to raise the challenges beyond the intra to international levels. This paper discusses border related issues which emanated from the geographical boundaries in some parts of Nigeria. Thus, a border in this paper tends not to be narrowed down to just geographical demarcation but extended to citizen's attitudes toward the nationality and marginalization feeling among some Nigerians. Nigeria is a sovereign nation that has similar borders outlining the areas of control. The north-eastern region which has intensified cases of insecurity, shares international water (Lake Chad) and land borders with the republics of Chad, Cameroun and Niger. The North Central on the other hand shared border with Benin Republic and Niger Republic in some parts and north – western bordering with Niger these borders which are to be the first line of defence and last line of nation's territorial protection are so porous that the defence is deterred. The porosity of border and security agencies in Nigeria argued in this paper focused on how these problems got incubated to when it hatched in folds of terrorism, its glaring to say that minority compromise security of others (Majority), The paper use historical approach and concludes that, unless the government and Nigerians make concerted efforts and energy into manning and policing the borders particularly in these regions, if not, her desire to address the insecurity problem in the country will remain elusive.

Keywords: porous borders, insecurity, north- east, north-western, north central, and Nigeria

Introduction

After the Nigeria civil war in 1970, security situation in Nigeria has been relatively stable except in the event of regional crisis, political and religious crisis in some cases, people had peace and could move freely from one area to another without harassment or molestation. Life was easy going. No problems among different ethnic groups Inhabiting and living together in the country. Everybody is engaged in the area struggled to earn and make ends meet. Life and properties were not only secured but also guaranteed because of the alert of security agents and people's will to be together e.g. Because of the present of police, soldiers and other security agencies in the country, people feared causing/fermenting problems/troubles solely to avoid wrath of the law.

Security situation in the country was highly maintained. But in the cause of history and passage of time various regions in the country drafted into insecurity crisis/problems. These insecurity which started manifesting in the country base on just individual political interest or economic derivation had landed the masses into serious lost of lives and properties. The recent ones are the north eastern region case which started in the 80s and assumed dangerous dimension with emergence of Boko Haram in 2009 and by 2014 it has not only escalated but also deteriorated thus making the security situation in the region to degenerate. This ugly trend which has engulfed the Northern- Eastern Nigeria among others created terrors among the people, made lives and properties unsecured and occasioned the killing of thousands of people in the region, thus eclipsing the region longstanding free in security threat the long period of insecurity crisis in the long North- Eastern Nigeria is attributed to the porous nature of the borders in the region.

On the list is the case of cattle rustling which became obvious in the north – western region, as it is now,¹ this had culminated into banditry and expanded into many parts of the north – central and continuously causing a lot of lost in lives and properties, this high level of insecurity problems has also resulted from the porous nature of the borders in the North-Central region where Nigeria has boundaries with other countries. This becomes one of the most intractable challenges facing the region today. The notorious produced from this menace ask for ransoms openly as if they are above the law. In totality, common Nigerians find it difficult to believe

¹ See detail in Femi-Adedayo Osinimu, Rebecca Aroriode & Ekpo Tony Johnsonin, 'Cattle Rustling: An Evolving Threat to Human Security in Nigeria' *Lapai journal of Nigeria History* Vol. 12 number1 (2000): 13-27.

that government do not have a hand in the insecurity problem as it was once postulated by the Head of State in Nigeria: General Sani Abacha of the blessed memory who said “ if you see crisis lasting longer twenty four hours in a country, government has hand in it.” It is against this background that this paper will attempt to investigate the contribution of porous border as the source to insecurity problems in Nigeria. On the other hand sees porousness beyond just leakages in the geographical demarcations but the use of the demarcation by few individuals at the detriment of others (Majority).

Insecurity, Border issues and Boko Haram Insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria

This is one of the six Geo-political zones in modern Nigeria. This was created in May 1967 from part of Northern Nigeria in the present political arrangement; it comprises of six states namely Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. The region is situated on the savanna zone and shares boundaries with republics of Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Along these borders, it also shares international waters i.e Lake Chad and land borders of around 1700kilometers with Cameroon, 90kilometers with Chad and 1500 with Niger totally 3900 kilometers in all. The borders in North-Eastern Nigeria include Bele Sahoda Nigeria Cameroon border in Adamawa State, Damasak Nigeria-Niger border and Gamboro Ngala Nigeria-Chad border all in Borno state²

These borders in North-Eastern Nigeria apart from being long are porous. The porosity of these borders in North-Eastern Nigeria has made it possible for the people in the neighboring Countries to cut corners into Nigeria, North-Eastern Nigeria inclusive easily. For example in Borno state, the porous nature of the border with Cameroon is accessible at any point by various means of transport during the dry season.

Similarly, besides their vastness, the borders have massive footpaths and illegal routes, the unofficial number of footpaths and illegal routes in Nigeria’s North-Eastern borders are unknown, however from conservative estimates, there are 25illegal roots into Adamawa in Nigeria from neighbouring countries and 250 footpaths in Damaturu/Maiduguri axis that linked or led directly to Cameroon, Chad or Niger with further links to Mali, Libya, and Sudan. These routes and

² Sani Imam, ‘Trade and Economic Development of Lake Chad Basin: The case of the fishing industry, C. 1900 1999’ (Ph.D Thesis, Bayero University, Kano, 2004), 20.

footpaths are unknown by the security agencies, unmanned and unprotected, thus it becomes a leaky route not only for smuggling but also trafficking of small arms and light weapons into the region. In essence, it is pertinent to note that the porous nature of borders in North-Eastern Nigeria which occasioned the movement of illicit arms and its proliferation in the region has not only fuelled terrorism in the area but also remained a contributing factor to the lingering insecurity problems facing the North-Eastern region in modern Nigeria today. This has not only precipitated several transitional crimes in the region but also create insecurity problems in the region. These problems, however, are best understood in the areas such as Illegal migration, the Proliferation of Small Arms and light weapons, Religion/Communal conflicts, The Escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency, and illegal migration into North-Eastern Nigeria.

As mentioned above, one of the attributing factors of porous borders to insecurity problems in North-Eastern Nigeria is the illegal immigration of aliens into Nigeria from the neighbouring countries. It can be reiterated that the porosity of the borders in this part of the country has made it easy for people to move into the region unhindered. The region shares boundaries with Cameroon, Chad, and Niger with extensive land borders. The preponderance nature of the borders in the North-Eastern axis is responsible for the influx of immigrants into the region on a daily basis to the region, there are several unmanned routes to Nigeria. These routes which have no gates, police customs, or immigration posts are easily accessible to emigrants from Cameroon, Chad, and Niger to venture into North-Eastern Nigeria. The smugglers, peddlers, traffickers, and other sundry offenders troop into Nigeria through this North-Eastern part, particularly from Sudan, Central African Republic Mali and Libya. This weakness of the borders in this region allows immigrants to enter the North-Eastern region with any kind of truck or load which fuelled illegal importation of goods and ammunitions.

The infiltration of these aliens into the region leads to rising of crimes in the area. Earlier than this period there was no any criminal act of violence in Nigeria, the North-Eastern Nigeria inclusive that could not be traced with which arm gangs enter and exist. These emigrants used undue advantage of the porosity of the borders to perpetuate crimes, terrorize people in the region. It is obvious that because of the porous nature of the borders, nobody is well secured, as a result, criminals from the neighbouring countries engage in robbery, raping, and killing people in the region.

These immigrants are from Cameroon, Chad and Niger, they terrorize people along any possible spots and around the roads which range from Maiduguri to Yobe, Bama-Banki, Pulka-kirana, Maiduguri-Biu, Gomboru Ngala, Yola to Maiduguri, Maiduguri to Bauchi, Maiduguri to Gombe and Taraba to Maiduguri. It is through these strategies that they smuggle weapons into North-Eastern Nigeria. Similarly, the porosity of the borders and lack of grounded plans to curb the problem paved the way for Rebels from Chad to infiltrate into the North-Eastern region of Nigeria. The Chadian rebels in 1991 used the advantage of the porous nature of borders in the region and set up a camp in the Abadam Local Government Area of Borno state. They began to harass and massacre innocent citizens making Abadam in the region a disastrous area. In a nutshell, insecurity problem christened by porous orders should not only be blamed for illegal immigration which occasioned terrorist activities as a sole reason that led to the deterioration of the security situation in the north Eastern Nigeria, but also the proliferation of small Arms and light weapons in the region.

Reason had been that North Eastern region of Nigeria over years has remained a transit and destination of small arms and light weapons. As observed, out of an estimated 640million small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in circulation globally 100 million are estimated to be in Africa, 8million in West Africa alone and over 70% or about 8 to10 million in West Africa are in Nigeria.³ For years now, Nigeria government has adopted various measures aimed at curbing the proliferation of small Arms and light weapons in the country including the North-Eastern region, such as the rely on the enacted 1959 fire arms Act, promulgated Decree 4 of Robbery and fire arms provision in 1984, established in 2000 and 2001 National committee on proliferation of illicit trafficking in small Arms, entered bilateral cooperation with its neighbors namely Republic of Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger Republics on Arms proliferation, participate actively in multinational arrangement and global discussion on small arms and light weapons and signatory to a number of international measures to curb small arms and light weapons proliferation⁴. Besides, there were reports that between 1998-2001, 2001-2003, 2003-2007 the police in different locations in Nigeria, North Eastern Nigeria inclusive have seized locally made and imported pistols, arms, Rounds of

³ Vos Okeke, 'The Nigerian State and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Northern part of Nigeria', *Journal of Education and Social Research*, Vol. 4., no. 1., MCSER Publishing, Rome, Italy, January (2014): 422, 423.

⁴ Vos Okeke, 'The Nigerian State and proliferation of Small Arms and Light.....'

Ammunitions and intercepted several trailers of arm weapons⁵ but despite these measures undertaken by the government and laudable efforts of the Nigeria police force, the North Eastern Nigeria continued to witness proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region. The cause of this development is highly tied to the porous nature of borders in that part of Nigeria. The porous border in the region represents one of the intractable problems threatening the security atmosphere of the North- Eastern region of modern Nigeria.

It is obvious that, the porosity of the borders in the North-Eastern Nigeria is too vast and the security agencies over the years have found it difficult to patrol the borders in the region effectively. The consequences of this development according to one source is that it has not only made it possible for the importation of contraband goods into the area, but also made the region to serve as a leaky routes where large scale of arms and ammunition, guns and other destructive weapons are smuggled into Nigeria through Adamawa, Borno and Yobe state by merchants of death.⁶

Many methods have been employed by these smugglers to outsmart the security agencies at the borders and through the foot paths especially in Borno and Yobe state areas. The methods include the use of camels, cows and donkeys to traffic arms, ammunition and drugs like, cocaine into Nigeria.⁷ Hence, these weapons are small, light and collapsible, they are concealed and moved by smugglers on camels and donkeys back in a special crafted or thatched bags meant for illegal expedition with the assistance of nomadic pastoralist or herders, these smugglers move in an unexpected and unsuspected forms, therefore, hardly they are undetected. The proliferation of the arms into area become rampant⁸

Similarly, on some occasions, some cows and grains merchants in the north-eastern sub region of Nigeria devised a means of hiding cache of arms and ammunition in

⁵Eko Lawrence Alobi, 'Review of Nigeria's Efforts At combating Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Proliferation: The NATCOM Experience'(Presentation, National Consultative Forum ECOWAS Commission Yakubu Gown Crescent, Abuja, June 24/2014)

⁶Eko Lawrence Alobi, 'Review of Nigeria's Efforts At combating Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) proliferation: The NATCOM Experience', (Presentation, National Consultative Forum ECOWAS Commission Yakubu Gown Crescent, Abuja, June 24/2014)

⁷Vos Okeke, 'The Nigerian State and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Northern part of Nigeria', *Journal of Education and Social Research*, Vol. 4., no. 1., MCSER Publishing, Rome, Italy, January (2014): 422

⁸Vos Okeke and Oji, (2014), 423

an empty fuel tankers of vehicle engines and inside bags of grains mostly undetected by security agencies at the affected border posts. The grains are transported in large quantity via truck, trailers, Lorries and old model pick up vans and jeeps with little attention given to them by security agents. Thus contributing to their proliferation in the north-eastern and Nigeria at large.⁹In the same vein, some of these merchants of death wrapped the arms on polythene bags and stocked into fuel tankers or sewage for long distance transfers. For example, in 2013, soldiers in Kebbi state intercepted a petrol tanker loaded with three AK47 Rifles, one rockets, propelled grenade (RPG), nine AK47 magazines, and 790 rounds of 7.62mm special ammunition in fuel compartment of tankers suspected to be destined to the north-eastern geo-political zone¹⁰.

Women are also used in the smuggling of small arms and ammunition into the region. The women recruited serve as arms couriers hid AK47 rifles on the back covered with their veil or concealed Impoverished Explosives devices (IEDs) on their back as if they are babies. Such women allegedly received between N5000 and N50, 000, \$30 and \$312 depending on the mission and location for the delivery of the guns and (IEDs).¹¹When security was tighten on these borders, smugglers disguised as women to evade the attention of the security forces while transporting the arms, thus contributing to its proliferation. They concealed arms and ammunition in grains, in plastic buckets, sacks and in their homes which are in turn taken to other parts of North-Eastern Nigeria.¹²

Furthermore, as earlier explained, it is observable that the porous nature of the borders and their weak management has also made it possible for the movement of these small arms to find their ways into the largely, local crafts of small arms producers also sell massively. There was discovery of the local crafts and small weapons production industries in Borno and Yobe States. The locally produced weapons later became a sound and cheap alternative to import weapons and use for

⁹ Vos Okeke, 'The Nigerian State and proliferation of Small Arms and Light.....

¹⁰ Gibran Muhammad and Gbadamosi Yakubu, 'Proliferation of Small Arms and Light /Weapons in the North Eastern Nigeria: Implications for National Security' in *Northern Region And Challenges of Development, Al-Mishadan, Makurdi, Benue State*,(eds.) P. Bwaya and A.R. Audu (Makurdi: Benue State, 2014), 200 – 203.

¹¹ Muhammad Sagir, 'Border Security: Arms Proliferation and Terrorism in Nigeria', retrieved from <http://abusidiqu.com.2015>

¹² Osimen Goddy and Anegbode John 'The Borderless. Border and Internal Security Challenges in Nigeria', *International Journal of Political Service* Vol. 3., number 3 (2017): 21

violent crimes in North-Eastern Nigeria.¹³In essence, the availability of porous borders occasioning the trafficking of small arms, light weapons and its proliferation encouraged ethno-Religious conflicts in the region and formed national news in Nigeria.

This issue of ethno-Religious conflicts on its own dominated the scene of insecurity in the area such that it become national issue and attracted national concern and sympathy, its then worth mentioning in the analysis of the role of porous borders to the insecurity problems in the North-Eastern Nigeria as it fueled of religious/communal conflicts which led to the loss of lives and properties in Nigeria.

Historically, many communities in modern Nigeria has experienced one religious/communal conflict from one period to another. As regard to religious conflicts which dated back to 1953, after this period the region witnessed Maitatsine riots which started in Kano in 1980s and escalated to the North-Eastern states of Borno on 26th -27th October 1982, Gongola now (Adamawa and Taraba States) Jimeta from 27th February to March 1984 and 25thApril 1985 Gombe and Bauchi states respectively. In 2004 there was religious crisis in Numan, Adamawa State, there was another one in 1991 in Tafawa Balewa in Bauchi State and in 2006 there was yet another Muslim protest in Maiduguri Borno State against the Danish cartoons of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)¹⁴Similarly, in September 2004, there was a religious crisis in Kaltungo local government area of GombeState, in 1994 and 2004 Potiskum and Maikafi towns in Yobe State¹⁵ and presently, Nigeria, is battling with Boko Haram insurgency in the area.

Apart from religious conflicts witnessed in the region, there are communal conflicts and communal clashes on several occasions that triggered series of communal conflicts between one another as a result of over population, shortage of land, control of overland, natural resources, inheritance, reprisal, chieftaincy tussles, political control/rivalries.¹⁶ For instance, in 2004 there was Bachama/Fulani land

¹³ Gibran Muhammad and Gbadamosi Yakubu, 'Proliferation of Small Arms and Light /Weapons in the North Eastern Nigeria: Implications for National Security', 207

¹⁴ Atim, 'The State and Secretarial Violence in North Eastern Nigeria: A Study of BokoHaram Radicalization', in *Northern Region And Challenges of Development*, (eds) P. Bwaya and A.R. Audu, Al-Mishadan (Makurdi: Benue State, 2014), 364.

¹⁵Emuka Uka, 'Ethnic, Religious and Communal Conflicts in Nigeria: Implications for Security and Social Services and Sustainable Development', *Bassey Andah Journal*, vol. 1. (2005): 6

¹⁶ EmukaUka, 'Ethnic, Religious and Communal Conflicts, 7.

conflict in Adamawa state and the Tafawa Balewa/Bugorolocal government communal conflict in 1991. In the same vein, in March 2005, Gombe state, witnessed a communal conflict between the people of Dachiya and Kaltungo communities. Communal crises also surfaced in 1999 and 2007 between the Jukun, Chamba and Kutep communities of Taraba State¹⁷ and of recent between the Jukun and Fulani in Taraba State. These religious/communal conflicts are increasingly becoming deadly in North-Eastern Nigeria as a result of the sophisticated weapons available.¹⁸

It is obvious that the religious/communal conflicts are encouraged by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which were occasioned by porous borders. Though some of these firearms are locally made while others are imported, they are however acquired by the people in the region not only to uphold the pride of their respective communities but for self-defense against insecurity threatening the peace in the north eastern Nigeria. Besides, the religious/communal conflicts and the porous nature of the borders in the north-eastern Nigeria are also credited to escalation of Boko Haram insurgency in the region.

Another menace of porous borders which is responsible for the insecurity problem in the North-Eastern Nigeria is their role in the escalation of Boko Haram insurgency in the region. The lingering and escalation of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria according to one source is the porous nature of the borders in that part of modern Nigeria,¹⁹ the porous border in Borno and Yobe States which are the strongholds of Boko Haram militants has made it possible for the sect to smuggle arms into North-Eastern Nigeria,²⁰ they began their offensive activities in the region with local weapons such as bows and arrows, locally made guns, bombshells, hatchet, knives, cutlasses, axes, swords etc. In 2009 and continue to use them up to 2011, in the course of history and passage of time between 2012 and 2013 the militants through these porous borders were able to have access to arms such as AK47 Rifles, Rocket Propelled Grenade(RPG) chargers, round 7.6mm of special ammunition, large cache of arms and ammunition. Through these borders Boko

¹⁷ Gibran Muhammad and Gbodamosi Yakubu, "Proliferation of Small Arms and Light /Weapons in the Northern Nigeria, 208.

¹⁸ Suranjan Weeraratne 'The Origin the Expansion of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria', http://www.tandonline.com/doiabs/10:1080/09546553_215_100557427.

¹⁹ Suranjan Weeraratne 'The Origin the Expansion...

²⁰ Emeka Chima Onuoha, 'Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation and Human Security in Nigeria', *Conflict Trends* 1, (2011) 51.

Haram were able to conceal improvised explosive devices (IED) and gun pocket launchers, anti-air-craft missiles, G.3 rifles, FMC magazines etc.²¹It is understood that while the sect used partial (RPGs) which are explosive projectable to attack and destroy targets from long distance, they also rocket launcher as observed can go as far as 900mm.²²

As a result of highly sophisticated weapons Boko Haram moved on motorbikes that enable its fighter to hit targets from a long distance. This development according to one source did not only boost their morale but also resulted in more insurgencies in the North-Eastern Nigeria.²³It is argued that, the first cracked down on Boko Haram in 2009 was as a result of subsequent violence in 2010 which saw the group not only active in five Nigeria states but also rising intensively beyond north east. Attacks by the sect in the said year ranged casualties of the incident in the region to stand at 2.02%. The above rose to 4.6% in 2011. The escalation of the sects hostilities, in 2012 led the militants became active in 18 Nigerian states mostly in the Northern part of Nigeria. Similarly, in 2013 there were repeated cases of Boko Haram assaults in major towns in the North-Eastern Nigeria, notably Maiduguri.²⁴In the same vein, in 2014 Boko Haram were not only responsible for mass kidnapping including the Chibok girls but also an average of 1.5% attacks on civilian population in the North-Eastern part of modern Nigeria (a territory the size of Belgium) the sect attacks on the region doubled in 2015 as it rose to 3.8%.²⁵

Despite forcing the group to retreat into Sambisa forest as a result of collation offensive in April 2015 the sect continued their operation up to 2016 by employing suicide bombers to attack mosques, churches and markets throughout Nigeria, especially in the North-Eastern Nigeria; the region witnessed not only killing, but massacre of people and frequent invasion of university of Maiduguri by the group, also the abduction of oil exploration personnel, lecturers of University Maiduguri,

²¹ Sadiq Olasile, 'Boko Haram: The Menace of Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation', *International Academic Journal of Educational Research* Vol. 1. number 1, (2015): 25.

²² Lord Gilbert, 'Prolongation of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria', *The International Dimension Research on Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 4, number 14, (2014): 153.

²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boko_Haram, 'Campaign Violence', Retrieved 1/22/2018, 7.

²⁴ Muhammad Joda and AbdulRasheed Abolade 'Effects of insurgency on Girls Education in Northern Eastern Nigeria,' *European Journal of Education and Development Psychology*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2015): 4

²⁵ Otokpa Agila, 'Demystification of Sambisa Forest', *Daily Trust Newspaper*, Abuja, 30/01/2017, 67.

police(women) including Nurses and Midwives.²⁶The cruel activities of the sect remained unaltered /unchanged in the North-Eastern Nigeria at the start of 2018. Since the beginning of the year till date Boko Haram is in possession of sophisticated weapons, use suicide bombers to kill, kidnap, and attack mosques, churches and markets in the North-Eastern Nigeria which have resulted in the death of many people in the region.²⁷

It is pertinent to note that, despite the presence of security agencies such as Nigeria immigration services (NIS), Nigeria Custom Services (NCS), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and Nigeria Police Force (NPF) in these borders the porous nature of borders in the North-Eastern Nigeria coupled with inadequate personnel, patrol vehicles, surveillance helicopters, and equipment, poor training of personnel, modern equipment such as cameras, body scanners, automatic rifles, communication gadgets, modern laboratories, presence of international and regional protocols of free movement of persons etc. have not only constitute a cog in the wheel of effective management and manning of the borders in the region but also the leaky route which has made the control of intruders, smugglers and merchant of death a mirage.²⁸In fact on the above challenges, problems of illegal migration, infiltration of terrorist, bandits, proliferation of small arms and light weapons and effective fight to end the insurgency occasioned by porous borders in the region turned out to be optical illusion,²⁹ the government of Nigeria need to provide effective management and security to her borders in the North-Eastern region.

Cattle Rustling, Banditry and Terrorism in the North Western Nigeria

North western Nigeria comprised of the state like Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto, Kaduna and Katsina who also have borders with other neighbouring countries like Niger and Benin republic as well as some Nigeria north eastern states who has borders with Cameroun and Chad. However, with the dawn of the Boko Haram in the last decade, a little percentage of rustling was introduced in north western Nigeria. This

²⁶Abducted Borno Oil Exploration Team Rescued; *Daily Trust newspaper*, Abuja 27/07/2017, 4.

²⁷Bamidele Rasak, Olubukoye Oye and Joseph Adeniyi, 'Fundamentalism, Boko Haram Movement and Socio-Development in North – Eastern Zone of Nigeria', *the Nigeria Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* Vol. 16, no. 2, Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Nigeria (2015): 220.

²⁸Muhammad Sagir, 'Border Security: Arms Proliferation and Terrorism in Nigeria', Retrieved from <http://abusidiqu.com.2015>.

²⁹Bosede Awodola and Caleb Ayuba, 'Terrorism in Nigeria: The case of Boko Haram', *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science* Vol. 6, no. 4 Italy (2015): 254.

started with need for people take care of their food, needs and to ensure the safety of the cattle stolen from villages; they created several settlements inside the savannah where they had every convenience such as their own cattle markets like the case of the Sambisa.³⁰ Though there were evidences that before the Boko Haram became hydra headed and were chased into the savannah, sheep or goat stealing was done mostly by common criminals during the end of Ramadan as is the case in most communities along the north east.³¹ However, this was further complicated with the infiltration of the Lake Chad by bandits from the Republics of Chad, Niger and Mali but in as much as it became an occasional issue across several communities within the borders, cattle stealing was restricted to the foreign bandits some of who went as far as Gombe, Borgu and Kontagora in their banditry.³² Invariably, cattle rustling has developed from ordinary survival crime into an organized crime with connections to politics, power and organized violence in Nigeria. Therefore, activities of cattle rustling witnessed in the North western part of the country in the recent years has sometimes been traced to the activities of the Boko Haram Islamic sect and can be argued that rebel or terrorist groups resort to cattle rustling as a means of raising fund in support of their group agenda³³

It then become obvious to note that these activities are not in total ignorance of the Fulani nomads who have in-depth knowledge, of the ways and how of the forest.³⁴ This is discussed with the idea that the successful activities of cattle rustling involve not only good information about hardship but also a wide knowledge of transit routes and movement. This is further explained by Okoli who suggests that most of the culprits of cattle rustling are nomads themselves who must have lost their cattle as a result of the incessant 'resource conflict' with the settled farmers³⁵

³⁰ Okoli Chukwuemeka Albert, 'Terrorism and humanitarian crisis in Nigeria: Insights from Boko Haram insurgency'. *Global Journal of Human Social Sciences*, Vol. 14 (1:1.0), (2014): 39-50.

³¹ Okoli, Chukwuemeka Albert and Atelhe, Gorge Atelhe, 'Nomads against Natives: A Political Ecology of Herder/Farmer Conflicts in Nasarawa State, Nigeria' *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* Vol. 2, (2014): 76-88.

³² Saheed Ahmad Rufai, 'Of ungoverned space, cattle rustling and national security - Part 2', (2017), (accessed 11 July 2017).

³³ Paul Eavis, 'SALW in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region; Challenges and ways forward', *Springer* Vol. IX, no. 1 (2002): 253. <http://www.sonstitute.org/bjwa/archive/911/smallarms/eavis.pdf> (accessed 26 July 2017).

³⁴ Femi-Adedayo Osinimu, Rebecca Aroriode&Ekpo Tony Johnsonin, 'Cattle Rustling: An Evolving Threat to Human Security in Nigeria' *Lapai journal of Nigeria History* Vol 12, no. 1 (2000): 13-27.

³⁵ Ibrahim Abdullahi, 'The State of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Sub-Saharan Africa: Regional, State and Local Causes' *International Journal of Business & Law Research* Vol. 4, no. 3 (2016): 22-36.

or disgruntled Fulanis who have lost cattle. On the other hand, another factor aiding the prevalence of cattle rustling in contemporary Nigeria is the dwindling living conditions of the herdsmen which stem from the outcome of climate change and the attendant resource conflicts which precipitate criminal dispositions among the herdsmen which is aided by the easy access to arms and ammunition which facilitate the proliferation of criminal operations among unscrupulous elements in the country.³⁶

The criminal impunity of the people, arising from the level of poverty in the nation due to government and private organizations inability to provide employment and create avenues for wealth creation is also a factor to the rise of cattle rustling in Nigeria. The unemployed factions have resulted into other means of generating wealth to help sustain themselves and their families. The level of economy wealth lost at this point is not only degrading the potentials of cattle business but also has an advert effect on the true nature of how much cattle business generates for the nation. Also, speculations have it that, most herders get more respect and prestige with notable influence with the amount of cattle they have in possession. Invariably, the more cattle they have, the more affluence they derive. Thus herdsmen tend to take to cattle rustling as a means of increasing their number of cattle to gain power, respect, and affluence. This is juxtaposed with Okoli's statement that says that the majority of cattle rustling incidence are carried out by herdsmen.³⁷

An epitome of the impact of small arms and light weapons in inflaming communities' animosities is that of cattle rustling. Its association with the Proliferation of arms and ammunition has become a common threat in northwestern/ middle belt regions of Nigeria. The acts of violence witnessed in cattle rustling activities are usually instigated by the increased use of weapons. The majority of the rustlers arm themselves with these weapons that aid them to intimidate and threaten the herdsmen from whom they steal the livestock. Moreover, it is obvious that these weapons have led to an increase in killings in the area, and guns are therefore seen as an economic investment.³⁸

³⁶ Kennedy Agade Mkutu, 'Small Arms and Light Weapons among Pastoral Groups in the Kenya-Uganda Border Area,' *African Affairs* Vol. 106, no. 422 (2007): 47-70.

³⁷ Femi-Adedayo Osinimu, Rebecca Aroriode & Ekpo Tony Johnsonin Cattle Rustling: An Evolving Threat to Human Security in Nigeria *Lapai Journal of Nigeria History* Vol. 12, no. 1.

³⁸ Daily NEWS and various forms of information channels have captured these activities in Nigeria

Traditionally, the pastoralist practiced cattle rustling using spears and bows, now, it advanced to a weapon of choice (the AK-47.22 Pastoral) which is unbelievable to be found with a layman, the common claim can be that such communities arm at selves defense but on the offensive part; reasons with the need to protect themselves and their cattle from being plundered by hostile groups as well as using arms to forcefully steal stock from other pastoral communities is bastardized, Finally, as a result of the accessibility and volume of foreign supplies, major internal markets have emerged where rebels, criminals, and terrorists can access weapons, ammunition, and explosives. This has led to a catastrophic rise in violent deaths in local communal conflicts over land and water, or the traditional practice of cattle rustling.³⁹

The presence of large swathes of forest reserves that are generally out of the reach of the Nigerian security operatives is in a way making it possible for criminals. Most of the rustling activities take place in state-owned reserves such as the Kamuku, Kiyabana, and Falgore forests in Northwestern Nigeria.⁴⁰ Most of the arms and ammunition that the criminals were using to carry out their dastardly acts were being ferried into the country through the usage of animals that crossed the forest.⁴¹ This aids as a perfect location for criminals to hide out from security forces as it is extremely difficult to control all border areas between countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The reluctance of Nigerian security operatives to enter these forest areas seems to be largely due to inefficiency, collaboration, and corruption.⁴²

First, one major consequence of the lack of equipment and poor motivation of the Nigerian security forces is gross inefficiency as they are ill-equipped and ill-motivated in contrast to the criminals who are well-armed and motivated. Second, security forces and rustlers are often in cahoots which seems obvious given the open manner of rustling and the reluctance of the security operatives to act, even when provided with intelligence by local residents.⁴³ And the third issue corruption

³⁹ Olaniyan, Azeez&Yahaya, Aliyu, 'Cows, Bandits, and Violent Conflicts: Understanding Cattle Rustling in northern Nigeria', *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 51, no. 3 (2016): 93-105.

⁴⁰ Olaniyan, Azeez and Yahaya, Aliyu, "Cows, Bandits, 98.

⁴¹ Olaniyan, Azeez and Yahaya, Aliyu, "Cows, Bandits, 98-99.

⁴² National Express, 'Cattle Rustling Could Be More Dangerous than Boko Haram', National Express, 4 February, www.national-express.com/ng/cattle-rustling-could-be-more-dangerous-than-bokoharam, (2017).

⁴³ Omolara Akinyemi, 'Globalization and Nigeria Border Security: Issues and Challenges' *International Affairs and Global*, Vol. 11 (2013): 4
<http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/IAGS/article/viewFile/6226/6355>.

is highly explained⁴⁴ in that people steal hundreds of cattle, move them around for days and they do not get apprehended, which means there is a problem with our security system. Secondly, if they can take them to our markets here in Nigeria and sell them off, it means there is not only a problem with our intelligence gathering system but also a form of collaboration with the dealers because the major cattle dealers in the markets ought to know if the cows are stolen. It illustrates that there is a wave of collaborations at various levels of cattle rustling and there is an obvious inability of the police and other security outfits to deal with the problem because firstly they are insufficiently equipped to be able to handle the challenge. Second, there is a form of collaboration between criminal elements and security agents and thirdly there is outright corruption.⁴⁵

The porous nature of inter-state border lines in Africa makes strains-border cattle rustling conducive and thriving. Border security has come to assume heightened importance in the world today and it has become easy for transitional crimes to be conducted such as the moving of money, people, and goods across the world because of advancements in telecommunications, transportation, and technology in general. These borders promote the movement of illicit trade, goods, and services of which cattle rustled have become major commodities being passed and crossed along the Nigerian border lines. These borders are identified with the use of dried trees, oil drums as well as rims of tires to demarcate the national borders. This makes the border to be poorly managed, and unsecured.⁴⁶ This promotes the unrepressed entry of illegal migrants and cross-border activities. However, there are indefinable corridors or regions that served as a route to these illegal migrants, thereby posing a serious threat to the country and the national borders. For instance, it has been discovered that Nigeria has 1497 irregular and 84 regular routes as movements were done through illegal routes.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Yz Ya'u from the Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD), a non-governmental body funded by the MacArthur Foundation that is developing workable technological innovations against cattle rustling in Nigeria,

⁴⁵ Blench, Roger, 'The Transformation of Conflict between Pastoralists and Cultivators in Nigeria', (2003), Accessed 4 March 2017.

⁴⁶ Yusuf, Vincent, 'Nigeria Deadly Persistence of Cattle-Rustling. Daily Trust, 16 May 2015' (Accessed 4 January 2016) and Okoli Chukwuemeka Albert and Okpaleke Francis, 'Cattle Rustling and Dialectics of Security in Northern Nigeria,' *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (2014): 109-119.

⁴⁷ Ogbeche, Danielle (2016), 'Borno: Governor Shettima Claims Boko Haram Now Sell Stolen Cattle to Fund Terror Campaigns', in: Daily Post, 5 March, <http://dailypost.ng/2016/03/05/orno->

Herders/Farmers Conflicts, Banditry and Terrorism in the Central Nigeria Area

The scope of central Nigeria area enclosed the present states of Kwara, Kogi, Plateau, Nassarawa, Niger, Benue, and Federal Capital Territory. It covered the geographical centre of Nigeria today. It is located between latitudes 7° 30' North and 11° 15' North and longitudes 4° and 12° East meridian. It covers an area of approximately 342, 390km² or 37 percent of the total land area of Nigeria. It is bordered to the east and west by Cameroon and Benin republics respectively and the North and South by the northern and southern states. The area is also referred to as the Middle Belt of Nigeria and all those areas around the confluence such names as the River Benue is used to describe a geographical expression of the last 300 miles of the river. The Benue itself is where West Africa second longest river flowing from, to the Cameroon highland for approximately 750 miles before joining the Niger at Lokoja.⁴⁸

Herders/Farmers in Nigeria have deep roots and dated back to pre-colonial times (before the 1900s). However, these conflicts have become far more severe in recent decades due to population pressures, climate change, and various other factors. During the British colonial era, herders and farmers would agree on a system called *burti*, in which specific migration routes were set up for herders, with mutual agreement from the farmers, herders, and local authorities. However, the *burti* system collapsed around the 1970s when farmers increasingly claimed ownership of lands along cattle migration paths, increasingly leading to conflicts.⁴⁹ Initially, herders frequently exchanged milk for cereal grains with farming communities. That kept tie between the parties but in recent decades, milk is no longer being widely bartered as packaged beverages became more popular in towns.⁵⁰

Therefore, with the introduction of Modern medicines which provide drugs for the herder's livestock many diseases were controlled and they moved their livestock

[governorshettima-claims-bokoharam- now-sell-stolen-cattle-to-fund-terror-campaigns](#) (accessed 10 July 2017).

⁴⁸ Baba Yahaya, 'A study of Intergroup Relation in Central Nigeria Area from 1914: An Antidote to National Integration', *Africa Scholars Journal of Humanities and Social Science* (JHSS – 6) Vol. 8, no 6 (2020): 3.

⁴⁹ Blench, Roger, 'Conflict between pastoralists and cultivators in Nigeria' (Review paper prepared for the Department for International Development (DFID), Nigeria, 2010).

⁵⁰ Blench, Roger, 'Conflict between pastoralists and cultivators in Nigeria...'

further to the areas presently known as southern parts of Nigeria (the tsetse fly zone) they are able to keep their cattle on a large scale hence, tropical diseases in humid climate zones are now controlled. Starting from those implemented by the British colonial administration, tsetse control programs have also reduced the threat of diseases such as trypanosomiasis. Today, herders can keep their livestock alive devoid of back-warding animal diseases. In addition, over the past several decades, herders have been able to increase the cattle that can tolerate tropical diseases. This enabled the widespread migration of Fulani herders into the southernmost areas of Nigeria, for easy sell of their livestock at higher prices due to strong demand for beef and other meat products in Nigeria's populous southern towns and cities. However, in the south, they encountered sedentary communities that have not historically had any experience with peaceful negotiation and co-existence with nomadic herders. The increasing ease of access to weapons and religious polarization among both Christians and Muslims has added to the potential chances for violence.⁵¹

For this reason, since the Fourth Republic in Nigeria, in 1999, farmer-herder violence has killed more than 19,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands more followed a trend in the increase of farmer-herder conflicts throughout much of the western Sahel, due to an expansion of agriculturist population and cultivated land at the expense of pasturelands; deteriorating environmental conditions, desertification and soil degradation;⁵² this led to the breakdown in traditional conflict resolution mechanisms of land and water disputes; and proliferation of small arms and crime in rural areas.⁵³ Insecurity and violence have led many populations to create self-defense forces as well as ethnic and tribal militias, which in turn fuels violence. The majority of farmer-herder clashes have occurred between Fulani herdsmen and farmers, exacerbating hostilities.⁵⁴

All these crises had claimed a lot of lives and properties such that some citizens find it difficult believe if Nigeria government has no hand in it due to the way it has been unwilling to address the causes of the crisis just as the case with Fighting Boko

⁵¹ Blench, Roger, 'Conflict between pastoralists and cultivators in Nigeria...'

⁵²Time, 'How Climate Change Is Spurring Land Conflict in Nigeria'. *Time*, 28 June, 2018.

⁵³Baca, Michael, 'My Land, Not Your Land: Farmer-Herder Wars in the Sahel', *Foreign Affairs* 21 (2015).

⁵⁴IPI Global, 'Farmer-Herder Clashes Amplify Challenge for Beleaguered Nigerian Security', *IPI Global Observatory*, 16 (2015).

Haram in the North-East and facing rising levels of violence in different regions of the country, the government has nonetheless tried to implement a few measures.

Due to the widely perceived inefficacy of the Nigerian government, armed vigilante groups have sprung up in many farmer communities. This situation would often lead to vicious cycles of bloody feuds among farmers and herders. Local politicians and religious leaders have also exacerbated conflicts by recruiting members and frequently exaggerating claims.

Since 2012, there have been projects to create transhumance corridors through the Middle Belt. Mostly supported by Northern lawmakers and opposed by their Southern counterparts, these endeavours have been rarely successful.

In 2019, President Muhammadu Buhari tried to create Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) settlements. His proposal was met with fierce criticism. On 17 May 2021, the 17 Southern governors in Nigeria issued the Asaba Declaration, aimed at solving the crisis.

Although ranching, where cattle are kept in enclosed parcels of land, has frequently been proposed as a solution to the crisis, this has proven to be highly unfeasible in Nigeria due to poor infrastructure (with unstable supplies of electricity, water, and fuel) and difficulties with acquisition and legal ownership of land. Land grabbing and cattle rustling are also potential difficulties that ranchers would have to deal with. Ranchers would also be unable to compete with nomadic herders with zero land-related costs;⁵⁵ all these rendered the problems of insecurity unsolved in Nigeria.

How to Manage Porous Borders and other Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria

The porosity of Nigeria particularly those in the regions discussed in Nigeria has precipitated several crimes such as terrorism, robbery, assaults, kidnapping, suicide bombing, arms trafficking, etc. All these have led to the killing of thousands of innocent people and insecurity in Nigeria. As observed the high level of insecurity in the country is largely due to the way the borders in the country are administered

⁵⁵Blench, Roger. *Pastoral conflict and supplying Nigeria with meat: how can the paradox be resolved*, (Field investigations on pastoralist-farmers crises areas and enhancement of MISEREOR's partners interventions in Nigeria, Phase 3. Revised paper prepared for ISEREOR/JDPs, 2017).

and manned.⁵⁶ The government of Nigeria need to put more effort and energy in policing its borders not only to stop the dangerous cross border infiltration that have blighted the security situation in the areas, it also needs to create security consciousness among the people in Nigeria. However, for these borders to be effectively administered and manned which will guaranteed the security of life and properties in the North-Eastern Nigeria, the following must be taken into consideration.

Nigeria government should recruit and train agencies saddle with the responsibilities of managing and manning the borders in the Nigeria. The existing personnel are not only inadequate but also poorly trained to meet the growing security challenges in Nigeria, security operatives such as immigration services, custom services; National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, police etc. are short of personnel. There is need to avail them with the knowhow of combating illegal activities of Trans border criminals and gun runners. The training in addition should of course be on model global modern practice of intelligence gathering pre-emptive, risk management. The training will create impact on their force.

The security agencies saddled with responsibilities of manning and managing of the borders and crime in the affected regions in Nigeria is said to operate with outdated and inadequate equipment and gadgets. In this regards, government should procure patrol vehicles, unmanned aerial vehicles and helicopters. Besides, it should procure digital infrared cameras, personal identification secure system including the other latest gadget needed for effective and efficient border and insecurity management/control. This will replace the old order/practice of poorly equipped in maintenance of helicopters of these agencies

The fencing of these borders with light wire will supplement shortage of manpower bedeviling bodies traditionally charged with manning and managing of borders in Nigeria.⁵⁷ Thus, security problem should not be left in the hand of government alone; we are all stake holders and should render our assistance in our possible ways. Cases of criminalities observed should be reported to the appropriate authority(ies), any refusal to do so implies individuals participation. Therefore, involvement of affected communities in manning/managing of insecurity

⁵⁶ Osimen Goddy and Anegbode John 'The Borderless. Border and Internal Security Challenges in Nigeria', *International Journal of Political Service* Vol. 3, no. 3(2017): 19.

⁵⁷ James Danfulani, 'Boko Haram Insurgency: A Need to Rethink Nigeria Borders Security...'

challenges should be encourage by the government in order to ensure security in Nigeria. These border communities have a critical role to play to properly police the porous borders and crimes around them. The communities and their traditional rulers cannot only identify everyone that are infiltrators but also are in a better position to provide vital information to the authorities that would help to arrest infiltrators and unscrupulous elements.⁵⁸

Finally, individual problem has individual solution, therefore, each of the zones explained above has peculiar crime around it, and government should apply pragmatic approach where necessary while holistic approaches are needed in some general terms. It is important for the government to sensitize the communities of southern part of Nigeria whom were not aware of earlier intervention colonialist made to settle the dispute between the Fulani and the aborigine of north central area.

Conclusion

This paper is an appraisal on the contribution of porous borders to the insecurity problems that are tagged with various tittles in the country, it is obvious that porous border as causative agent/factors in the illegal immigration into Nigeria; emigrants took undue advantage of the porosity of the borders and cress cross the border lines to perpetuate crimes. The paper also reveals that the insecurity situation responsible for illicit movement of arms which has continued to fuel religious, and communal conflicts at slice provocation and are used by criminals terrorize and kill the people of the affected Regions. The escalation and elongation of Boko Haram insurgency and crises are creation of the porous borders. The paper is of the opinion that for peace and security to rule supreme in Nigeria, the country's borders in the affected axis must be highly manned to hinder illegal influx and exist.

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⁵⁸ Okunu, 'Africa's Problematic Borderliness', Africa.org, February/March, 2010, 25.

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